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Songs for Courage

BY

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LOVINGLY DEDICATED

TO THOSE WHO ARE WALKING, FOR AWHILE,

THROUGH THE DARK



FOREWORD

IF through some darkened hour a word of mine Could shine
To light the road
For any heart grown weary of its load—
I would be glad today,
Gladder than I could say!

For through the darkest hours I have known, Words have shone
That I shall not forget:
Those promises that have not failed me yet;
The ringing words of cheer
That I still hear.

(God give me words today To light some darkened way).



CONTENTS

					Ł	AGE
BECAUSE SOME ONE H	As F.	AITH I	n M	Ε.	• .	1
I THINK THAT GOD	Is Pi	ROUD		•	•	2
Pilgrimage	•	•	٠	٠	•	3
I SHALL LAY THIS GRI	ief A	ASIDE	•	٠	•	4
Who Has Not Suffe	RED	•	•	•	•	5
A Song on a Bare Bo	UGH		٠	•	•	6
My Creed	•	•	•	•	•	7
PRAYER AFTER PAIN	•	٠	•	•	•	8
FELLOWSHIP .		•	•	•	•	9
Sparrows	•	•	٠	•	•	11
Griefs	٠	•	•	•	•	12
THE DAY	•	•	•	•	•	13
Walking Softly	•	•	•	•	•	14
A Song from Sorrow	•	•	•	•	•	16

CONTENTS

							1	PAGE
Answered	•	٠		•	•	•	•	17
SOLITUDE		•	•	•	•	•	•	18
A PRAYER F	or C	OURA	GE	•	•	•	•	19
FALLOW FIE	LDS			•	• '	•		20
THE MIRACI	Æ	•		.•	•	•	٠	21
Sympathy		•	٠	•	•	•	•	22
A Prayer			•	•		•	•	24
FAITH .	•	0.	•	• .			•	25
STARS .	• 1	•	٠	•		•	•	26
NIGHT .	•		•	•	٠	٠		27
"THEY SHA	LL B	e Coi	MFOR	TED"	٠	•	٠	28
By THE LIGH	IT OF	THE	YEAR	RS.	•		•	29
DEATH					•			31

BECAUSE SOME ONE HAS FAITH IN ME

BECAUSE some one has faith in me I cannot fail though all the way Winds up the hill.

My staff in hand, and cheerily, I can but fare me forth each day With right good will.

Because some one has faith in me I need to keep my heart quite true, My own faith strong, My vision, clear, that I may see, Undaunted by what meets my view, And sing a song.

God help me sing the song, I pray, God keep me clean and strong to go, Clear-eyed to see The untrod, upward winding way, For fail I cannot, one I know Has faith in me.

I THINK THAT GOD IS PROUD

I THINK that God is proud of those who bear A sorrow bravely—proud indeed of them Who walk straight through the dark to find Him there,

And kneel in faith to touch His garment's hem. Oh, proud of them who lift their heads to shake Away the tears from eyes that have grown dim, Who tighten quivering lips and turn to take The only road they know that leads to Him.

How proud He must be of them—He who knows All sorrow, and how hard grief is to bear! I think He sees them coming, and He goes With outstretched arms and hands to meet them there,

And with a look, a touch on hand or head, Each finds his hurt heart strangely comforted.

PILGRIMAGE

So long I have been guided by Thy power,
Up many a tangled path and stony hill,
And now, dear Lord, through this strange darkened
hour
Be with me still.

Be with me for the way is long and lonely, I am bewildered, and I cannot see, But Lord, I shall not be afraid, if only

You walk with me.

If I can ever keep recalling
The darkened roads I traveled in the past;
How, after You long guarded me from falling,
Light shone at last.

Then surely, Lord, I can go forward, knowing That somewhere on the hills the light will dawn, And I shall reach it safely, if in going, You still lead on.

I SHALL LAY THIS GRIEF ASIDE

I SHALL lay this grief aside, It will wait, Until I come back again Soon or late.

I shall move among my kind, I shall see No grief there as great as this Given me.

.

I am wiser than I was, I have gone Down the way my fellow-men Journey on,

And beside their grief, my own Is so small,
I shall not return to claim
It at all.

WHO HAS NOT SUFFERED

WHO has not suffered, does not know All that his God would have him know.

He has not learned the patient trust That those who suffer bravely, must.

He has not seen Faith's star arise Above the blackest midnight skies

Nor clung to Hope that lights the way Across the grayest, bleakest day;

Nor waited, quietly aware, Of God beyond unanswered prayer.

He has not known how deep a peace May follow some sweet, sure release.

Who has not suffered, does not know All that his God would have him know.

A SONG ON A BARE BOUGH

HEARD a valiant cardinal Dard-red against the winter dawn, He whistled from a leafless tree Upon a barren lawn,

The tiny dauntless splotch of red Shot up a challenge straight and high: A rocket-burst of silver stars To shower a winter sky.

The little brave, intrepid thing, A conqueror of cold and night, He drenched the bare boughs suddenly With color and with light:

A triumph and a victory That I have come to understand. I laughed, a broken laugh, and took Life once more by the hand.

MY CREED

HAVE the faith to know that this deep sorrow Weighing upon my heart will lift at last. That I shall waken on some glad tomorrow, Happy once more, the troubled darkness past.

And I have hope—I keep its fire burning—Although my soul and body be distressed,
The hope that somehow with the old earth's turning,
This pain will cease, and time will bring me rest.

Oh, I believe that He who walks beside me Closer than any lover, any friend, Will lead at last, no matter what betide me, Into the sunlight at the journey's end.

PRAYER AFTER PAIN

HOW can he thank Thee, Lord, for the good grain, Who has not conquered thistle and briar and weed?

How can he thank Thee for the sweet wild rain Who has not trod parched lands above dead seed? How can he lift a grateful heart for peace Who has not known some red-lit battle field? Oh, Lord, how can he comprehend release Who has not felt at last an old wound healed?

Out of earth's agony white flowers shine; Above the old scarred fields wild grasses run; Out of the crushed fruits of the sun comes wine, Out of the night the morning star—the sun. For every hour of pain that we have had— Even for these—Lord help us to be glad.

FELLOWSHIP

THINK that I can truly say today
That I am glad
For all the sorrow I have had.
I came upon one weeping by the way,
And I had words to say
To comfort her, because I, too, had known
A sorrow that my heart has borne alone.

I know now I am glad that pain has stayed Awhile with me,
For through it I learned sympathy
With any fellow mortal, hurt, dismayed,
Who prays as I have prayed
For quick release, and then has turned to wait
The answer that will come, though soon, or late.

Oh, it has taken longer than it should For me to see That grief and pain might work in me

Some ultimate reward, some lasting good.

I did not dream it could!

But now I know that only through these things

Can we reach out and touch life's hidden springs.

SPARROWS

I LOVE the sparrows, bad though they may be,
And you would love them, too, if you had lain
Long hours with them alone for company,
And if their friendliness had eased your pain.
Gray days, gray skies, gray sparrows on bare trees,
Yet something in their tuneless song so true,
I often think a sparrow's voice must please
The Lord as much as larks' and thrushes' do.

Remember this—"Are not two sparrows sold For one small farthing, yet not one may fall Without the Father sees it" this I hold More close than any comforting at all. "And fear ye not, therefore—" Oh, little birds, Your nearness brings the solace of these words.

GRIEFS

THE many griefs of yesterday Have left me, one by one, Until no shadow of them falls Across today's bright sun.

The thought that they would never go Became my sad belief, I brushed my hearth, and set a plate For each old weary grief.

And now today, new sorrow comes, This strange, unwelcome guest. I wonder, will he take his leave Tomorrow, like the rest?

If I can keep remembering How other griefs passed on, This shall not hurt me, I can wait Until he, too, is gone.

THE DAY

"THE day will bring some lovely thing," I say it over each new dawn:
"Some gay, adventurous thing to hold Against my heart when it is gone," And so I rise, and go to meet
The day with wings upon my feet.

I come upon it unaware,
Some sudden beauty without name:
A snatch of song, a breath of pine,
A poem lit with golden flame;
High tangled bird notes, keenly thinned,
Like flying color on the wind.

No day has ever failed me quite: Before the grayest day is done I find some misty, purple bloom, Or a late line of crimson sun. Each night I pause, remembering Some gay, adventurous, lovely thing.

WALKING SOFTLY

I MUST go softly now!
How can I learn the way—
I, who have moved so swift and sure,
Through each brief day?

How can I stay my feet! How can I learn to go Quietly, measuring off the days With steps grown slow?

I have walked softly now Many a long, long mile. I have paused often beside a stream, A gate, a stile;

And I have learned so much!
I have had time to see
Thousands of beautiful unsung things
Shine out at me.

Things I had missed before. I, who had gone too fast, Found after God had stayed my feet, His world, at last.

A SONG FROM SORROW

OUT of my sorrow I shall make a song
So beautiful that others' grief will cease.
If one but listen, silently and long,
I promise him my song shall bring him peace:
One clear high note of faith, one note of cheer,
And one of courage, flung against the sky;
But not one tremulous, low note of fear,
And not one muted, agonizing cry.

Oh, I shall make my song a thing of light.
The darkness only can put forth a star;
And out of sorrow—darker than the night—
A song shall lift that men will hear afar,
And listening, with faces, eager—glad—
Will say: "Where is the sorrow that we had?"

ANSWERED

THE prayer I long had prayed, God heard, Yet answered not a word.

My heart had not been schooled to wait An answer that came late.

I could not understand! Dismayed—I clutched His robes and prayed.

And then, strength spent, I kept quite still—At last, I learned His will.

Through strangely silent nights and days, I somehow learned His ways.

I did not hear His voice, yet He, I know, has answered me.

SOLITUDE

I USED to seek a crowd to find delight,
And this they gave me—laughter and brief song,
Bright powdered wings that dusted off in flight,
And bubbled-beauty, nothing lasting long.
But once I found a pathway down my heart:
A dim, untraversed way I had not known,
I walked it timidly, a thing apart,
Bewildered that I found myself alone.

But now I seek that beautiful retreat,
And find such cool, deep peace, such sheer delight:
Cold springs of water, welling at my feet,
White flowers by day, white guiding stars by night—
The old crowd's laughter falls upon my ear,
I am exploring, and I do not hear.

A PRAYER FOR COURAGE

GOD make me brave for life, Oh, braver than this! Let me straighten after pain As a tree straightens after the rain. Shining and lovely again.

God make me brave for life, Much braver than this! As the blown grass lifts let me rise From sorrow with quiet eyes Knowing Thy way is wise.

God make me brave—Life brings Such blinding things, Help me to keep my sight, Help me to see aright That out of the dark—comes light.

FALLOW FIELDS

THE field is worn from yielding the good grain,
Fallow it lies, its furrows dark and still.
Beneath the blinding sun and bitter rain
It patiently awaits its master's will.
It draws new power as the year goes by
From winds that sweep across its furrowed way;
It pulls the sunlight from the bending sky,
And holds it there to use again some day.

Now I, like any barren field must lie.
Fallow awhile. God make me wise to wait
As old fields do through storms, nor question why
Strength comes so slowly, peace, so very late.
Let me draw power from this time, and then,
Strengthened anew, rise up to serve again.

THE MIRACLE

THE pain has ceased! Oh heart, somewhere We met the Master on the way, It may be that we marked Him not Amid the multitude today; But it was Jesus, for behold, The old, old pain is gone, and lo, A miracle, no less than that Upon the road to Jericho! No less, my heart, we leapt to meet The joy His healing fingers hold, Than he who caught the glad sweet light Across Judea's hills of old.

Ah, Master, Thou whose love still keeps Thee pitiful, I bow to Thee.

My wistful, tired heart is filled
With this strange, wondrous ecstasy.

I thank Thee that we still can find
Thee close along the old earth-way;
That risen, yet somehow, somewhere,
We met Thee on the road today.

SYMPATHY

IF Jesus had not walked the earth, Footsore and weary, long ago, Oh, I might be so very tired, And even He could scarcely know The depths of my discouragement, Or just how tired I might grow.

If Jesus had not suffered much, And borne the greatest agony, I might have more than I could bear Of pain, and he could scarcely see How great would be my suffering, Or what that pain would mean to me.

But Oh, my Jesus understands, And looks in loving sympathy, "Like as a Father pitieth His child," 'tis thus He pities me, And I am glad that Jesus knows When I am walking wearily.

Perhaps a dark and stormy way
Is better for my feet to go,
For how could I reach forth a hand
In sympathy, unless I know
Something of pain and weariness
As Jesus knew them, long ago.

A PRAYER

MY Lord, I pray that through today I may walk patiently, Forgetting not that Thy dear hand Is leading me.

I know not what Thy wisdom, Lord, May choose for me today, What the long hours may hold for me I cannot say.

I only know that I may go Unquestioningly with Thee, Remembering that what Thou wilt Is best for me.

For Thou, Oh, Lord, canst see the end, While I but see the way—
Help me to walk it patiently
Throughout today.

FAITH

Faith is a brightness and a shining way;
Faith is a glory that the brave have worn;
Faith is a singing through a long, gray day;
Faith is a healing for old hurts long borne.
Faith is the first bright star hung low;
Faith is the ocean's moon-lit sheen;
Faith is the dreams that all hearts know,
The evidence of things that are not seen.

I have not seen it, yet it walks with me; I have not touched it, yet it holds my hand; I shall not lose it through Eternity, Whether my journey be by sea or land. With its high torch to light the alien skies, I shall face life and death with fearless eyes.

STARS

A STRANGE surprising gladness stirs my heart
At night when heaven's first lights dim and far
Swing in the dusk, and each one suddenly
Becomes the silver wonder of a star.

Becomes a shining splendor on the hills, Unfailing, steadfast, calm and high and white, Stars are so beautiful, so steeped in peace, They rest me more than anything at night.

There is an ancient comfort in the stars,. I treasure it: "Lift up your eyes and see,"
"He calleth them by name—not one hath failed—"
Oh, often through His stars, God comforts me.

NIGHT

THANK God for night, with its great gift of sleep,

More wonderful than all His gifts to men!
For stars that walk the dreamways, and that keep
Their wide-eyed watch until dawn breaks again.
Thank God for blessed silence down the land:
More soothing than the drip of summer rain;
For darkness, soft and cool as some dear hand
Laid on a forehead, feverish with pain.

Oh, only those who carry sleepless scars, Can know how sweet sleep is that comes at last; And only the eyes that have looked long at stars, Have learned night's secret as it marches past; Have learned to know how quiet God must keep To guide an earth through stars that men may sleep.

"THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED"

WOVEN through God's own Word
There is a silver thread:
"Blessed are they that mourn,
For they shall be comforted,"
Never a promise fails
Out of the words He said.

Never one word has failed! Cling to it, you who weep. There will come hope again, There will come peace and sleep; Promises God has made, He will not fail to keep.

Lift up your weeping eyes, Break of the daily bread, God has taken, and God can keep Safely your dear, loved dead. Walk with your hand in His, You shall be comforted.

BY THE LIGHT OF THE YEARS

I HAVE learned these things by the light of the years,
Like a child conning over his books,
That the darkness outside of my window at night
Is never as dark as it looks,
And if I but run out and search, I can find
Some little light, steady and kind.

I have learned that Hope is the white-feathered bird That sings all day on its nest,
That Fear is the crouching beast that comes
To tear the bird from its nest.
I have learned to close the door on Fear
After many and many a year.

I have patiently learned that pain will cease Though peace comes slowly and late, And that there will drift down to sleepless eyes

Lost sleep at last, if I wait. So why should I worry and fret and cry, Knowing these things pass by.

I have learned that to doubt is to hurt One who long Has walked by my side and been true,
That Faith wears a shining face, and to trust
Is the grateful, wise thing to do.
I have studied it long by the light of the years,
And have learned it, through my tears.

DEATH

To fold my hands a little while in sleep

A brief night through, and wait with quiet breath

The coming of the morning, and to keep Quite calm and still, is that what we call death? Is it a thing to fear, Oh, Lord of life, Oh, Lord of death, Oh, Lord of the unknown: To heed no more the clamor and the strife, To rest a bit, uncomraded, alone, Save with Thee, Lord, who has the power to keep Thine own.

And with Thee, Lord, why should I fear to wait A little while until my eyes shall see,
Or whether I shall wake me soon, or late,
So long as Thy cupped hand is holding me?
Grant, Father, when the night comes, I shall rise
With willing feet, and fold my work away;
Then, lying down to sleep, close fearless eyes,
Regretful not of further work or play;
But in the sleep Thou givest Thy beloved,
Await the day.









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